

P-0C



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CODE



AUTHORITY

MARCH
No. 52

RED MASK

10c

MORE MAGIC of THE PRESTO KID





WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM



100 TOY SOLDIERS

\$1.25



100 TOY SOLDIERS, MADE OF DURABLE PLASTIC,
EACH ON ITS OWN BASE, MEASURING UP TO 4 1/2"!!

- ★ FUN TO SHOW
- ★ FUN TO TRADE
- ★ FUN TO COLLECT

PACKED in this **FOOTLOCKER**
TOY STORAGE BOX



EACH FOOTLOCKER CONTAINS:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 4 Tanks | 8 Officers |
| 4 Jeeps | 8 Waves |
| 4 Battleships | 8 Wacs |
| 4 Cruisers | 4 Bombers |
| 4 Sailors | 4 Trucks |
| 4 Riflemen | 8 Jet Planes |
| 8 Machinegunners | 8 Cannon |
| 8 Sharpshooters | 4 Bazaokamen |
| 4 Infantrymen | 4 Marksmen |

COMPIX, Inc. Dept. R.M.52
10 Murray St. New York 7, N.Y.

HERE'S MY \$1.25 !

Rush the TOY SOLDIERS TO ME!

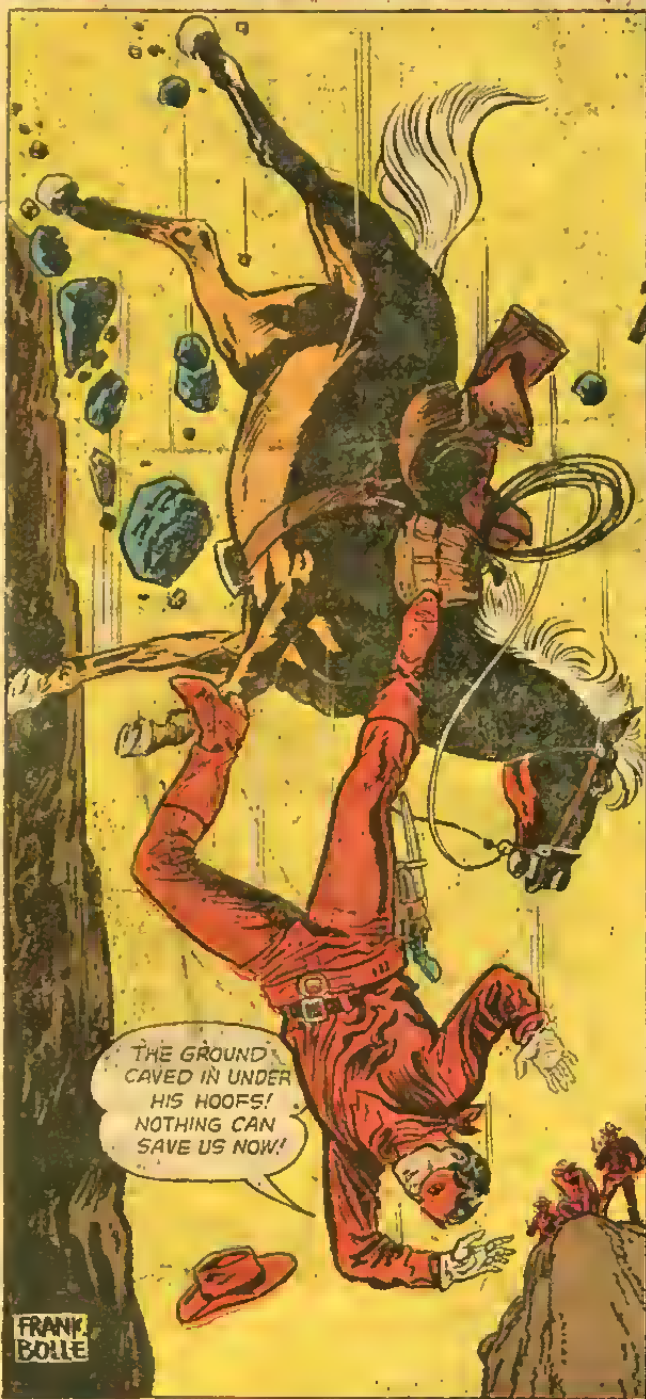
Name

Address

City State

NO COD'S

RED MASK



FRANK
BOLLE

THE MASKED RIDER OF THE RIO GRANDE FINDS HIMSELF FACING DEADLY DANGER ONCE AGAIN, THIS TIME FROM THE SKIPPER JONES GANG, WHEN HE ATTEMPTS TO DELIVER A FORTUNE IN GOLD. AS IF GIFTED WITH SOME MAGICAL POWER, THE GANG SEEMS TO FORSEE AND FORESTALL HIS EVERY MOVE, EVEN THOUGH THE CRIMSON CAVALIER HELPS HIMSELF BY—

THE FINDING OF REDMASK'S CAVE

AN OLD PROSPECTOR PLODS ALONG THE SANDS OF THE SUNBURST DESERT, UNAWARE THAT THREE MEN ARE FOLLOWING HIM WITH DEADLY INTENTNESS...

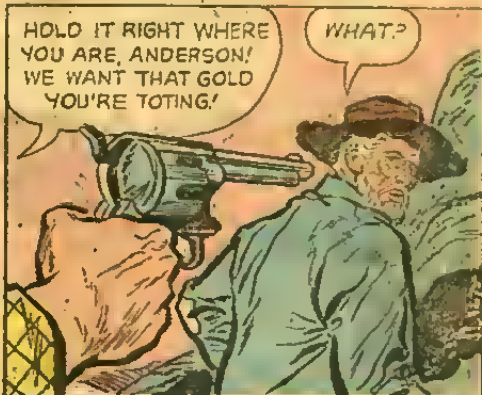
ALL MY LIFE I'VE SCRIMPED AND SAVED. NOW I'M RICH! RICH! THAT GOLD STRIKE I MADE WILL MAKE ME FAMOUS!



WHERE DESERT COUNTRY MEETS THE ROCKY LEDGE OF THE LAVA FLATS, OLD JOHN ANDERSON WHIRLS TO THE GLINT OF SUNLIGHT ON A REVOLVER BARREL...

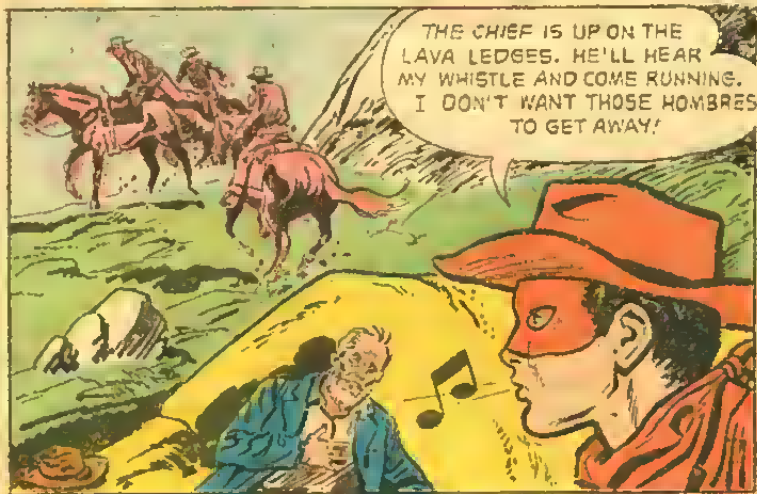
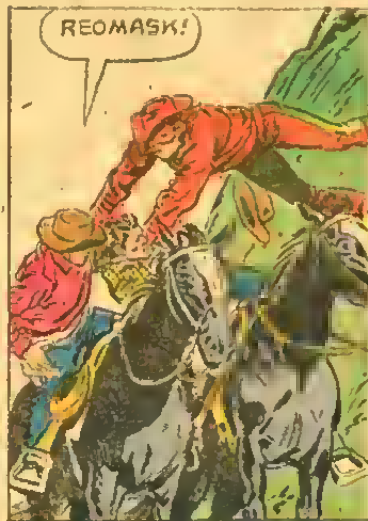
HOLD IT RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE, ANDERSON! WE WANT THAT GOLD YOU'RE TOTING!

WHAT?

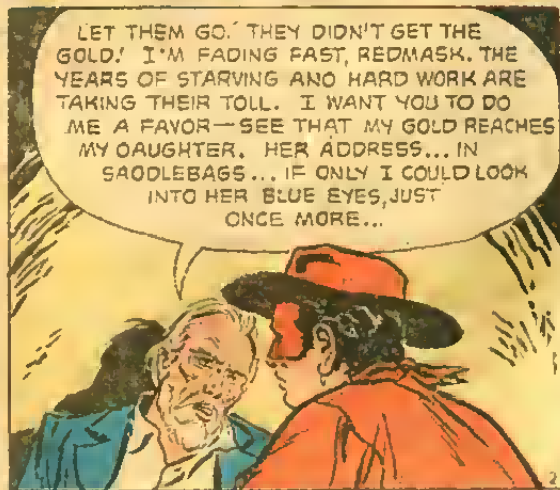
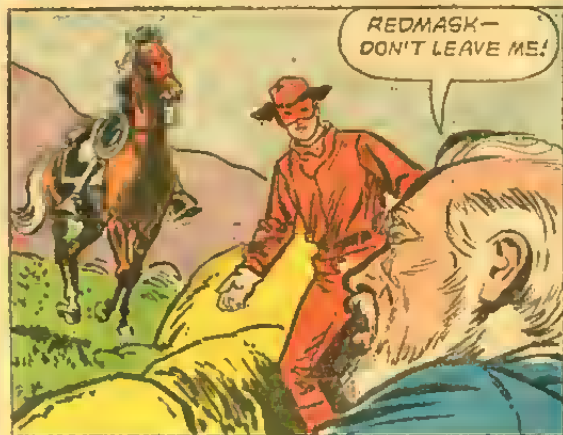




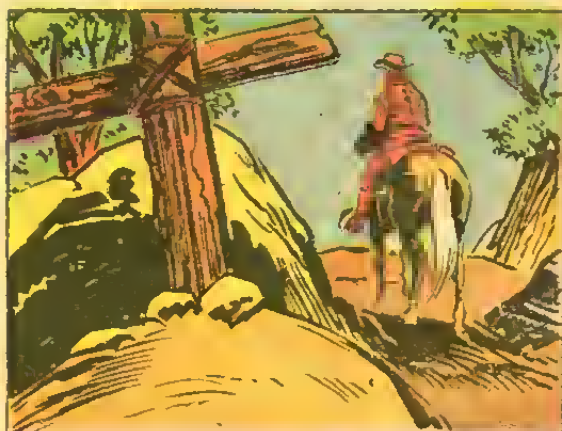
SUDDENLY A CRIMSON FLAME SEEMS TO ERUPT FROM NOWHERE! A FLASH OF RED ACROSS THE SKY, A VOICE CRYING OUT—



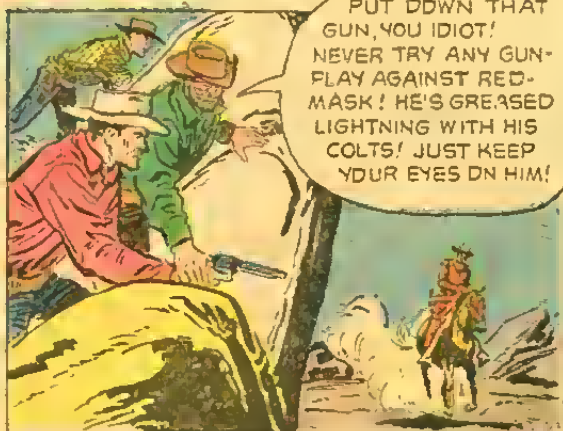
BUT AS THE GREAT PALOMINO STALLION TROTS UP, JOHN ANDERSON CRIES OUT HOARSELY...



REDMASK RIDES AWAY. NOW HE HAS A FORTUNE IN GOLD NUGGETS WEIGHING DOWN THE CHIEF...

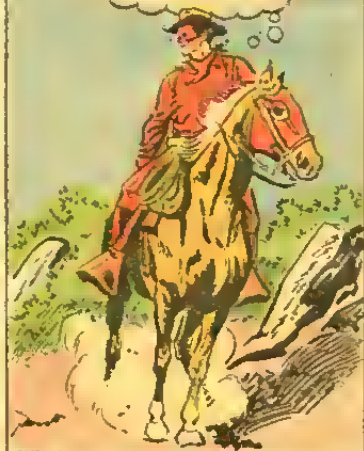


FROM THE LAVA ROCKS, KEEN EYES WATCH HIS EVERY MOVE...



PUT DOWN THAT GUN, YOU IDIOT! NEVER TRY ANY GUN-PLAY AGAINST RED-MASK! HE'S GREASED LIGHTNING WITH HIS COLTS! JUST KEEP YOUR EYES ON HIM!

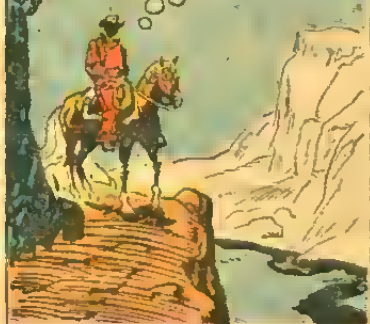
THOSE THREE BANDITS ARE KEEPING UP WITH ME, AT A DISTANCE. THEY'RE WAITING TO SEE WHAT I DO WITH THE GOLD.



I COULD TAKE IT INTO TOWN TO THE BANK, BUT THEY'D BE SURE TO TRY A ROBBERY, AND SOMEONE MIGHT GET HURT. NO, IT'S BETTER TO PUT IT IN A HIDING PLACE—SOMEWHERE THEY COULD NEVER FIND—BUT WHERE?

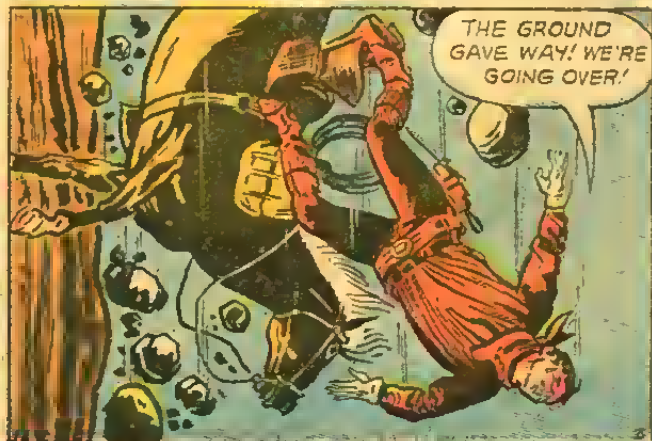
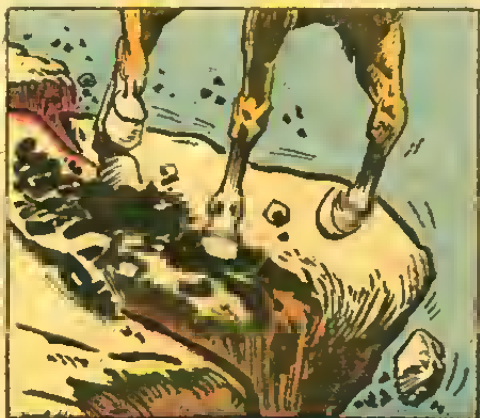


I DON'T KNOW OF ANY PLACE THOSE GUNSLICKS COULDN'T FERRET OUT, AND I KNOW THIS COUNTRY LIKE THE BACK OF MY HAND! THERE MUST BE SOMEPLACE, THOUGH, IF ONLY I COULD THINK OF IT!



AS THE PALOMINO STALLION MOVES FORWARD, THE EARTH AT THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF PATH GIVES WAY BENEATH HIS HOoves!

THE CHIEF AND REDMASK ARE PITCHED OUT INTO SPACE. BENEATH THEM LIES COMPLETE EMPTINESS!

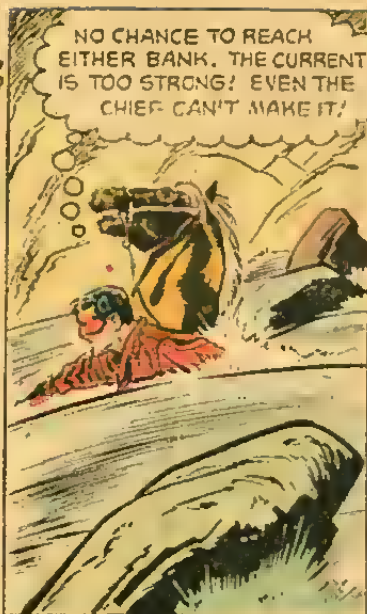


THE GROUND GAVE WAY! WE'RE GOING OVER!

LIKE FALLING ROCKS, REDMASK AND THE CHIEF PLUMMET DOWN TO HIT THE RUSHING RAPIDS OF THE INDIAN BOW ROVER—



NO CHANCE TO REACH EITHER BANK. THE CURRENT IS TOO STRONG! EVEN THE CHIEF CAN'T MAKE IT!

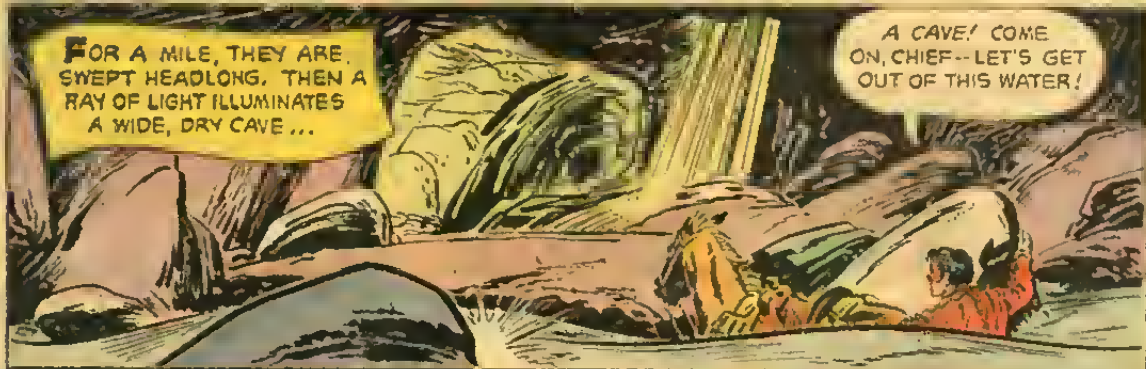


WHERE THE CLIFF SHELVES OUT OVER THE RIVER, THE WATERS POUR MADLY UNDERGROUND! HORSE AND RIDER ARE SWEEPED INTO COMPLETE BLACKNESS...

WHERE IS IT TAKING US?



FOR A MILE, THEY ARE SWEEPED HEADLONG, THEN A RAY OF LIGHT ILLUMINATES A WIDE, DRY CAVE...



A CAVE! COME ON, CHIEF--LET'S GET OUT OF THIS WATER!

IN A MOMENT, THE SADDLE-BAGS ARE SAFELY HIDDEN—



THERE'S EVEN AN EXIT FROM THAT CAVE OVER HERE ON THE SLOPES OF WARBONNET HILL!



THAT NIGHT, REDMASK PENS A LETTER TO THE DAUGHTER OF OLD JOHN ANDERSON. AS HIS PEN SCRATCHES ACROSS THE PAPER, HE DOES NOT SEE A MAN PEERING DOWN AT HIM—

I'LL HAVE HER COME OUT TO BULLET AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND TURN OVER THE GOLD TO HER!



TWO DAYS LATER, AS THE BULLET-SLEEPY GAP STAGE ROLLS ACROSS THE PRAIRIE...

REIN UP, DRIVER! WE WANT TO SEE A LETTER YOU'RE CARRYING!

STOP THE COACH—OR WE'LL STOP YOU!



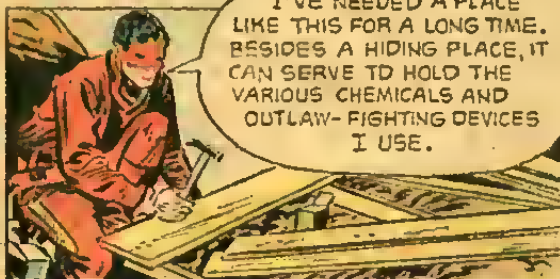
HE HID THE GOLD, ALL RIGHT. IN A CAVE! HE DOESN'T SAY WHERE! WE'LL JUST HAVE TO LOOK FOR IT!

NO, WE DON'T. I GOT A BETTER IDEA...



MEANWHILE, REDMASK RETURNS TO THE CAVE WHERE HE HID THE GOLD. HERE HE BUSIES HIMSELF WITH SAW AND HAMMER AND PLANHS OF WOOD...

I'VE NEEDED A PLACE LIKE THIS FOR A LONG TIME. BESIDES A HIDING PLACE, IT CAN SERVE TO HOLD THE VARIOUS CHEMICALS AND OUTLAW-FIGHTING DEVICES I USE.



TABLES, CHAIRS, RACKS FOR CLOTHES AND FOR SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS SOON FILL THE GREAT CAVE FROM TOP TO BOTTOM. THE FLOOR IS LEVELLED OFF, THE HOLES FILLED WITH CONCRETE FOR A SMOOTH SURFACE...

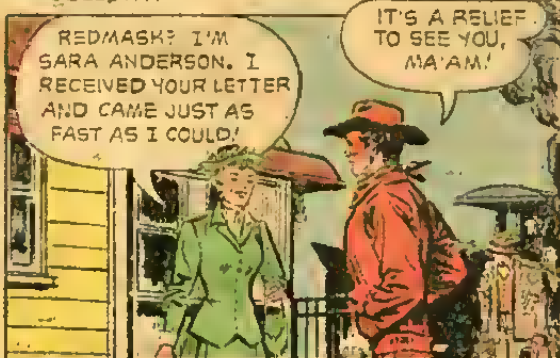
IT WAS WORK, BUT IT'LL BE WORTH IT. I EVEN DISGUISED THE ENTRANCE ON WARBONNET HILL. I HAVE A HIDEOUT OUT—A PERFECT ONE!



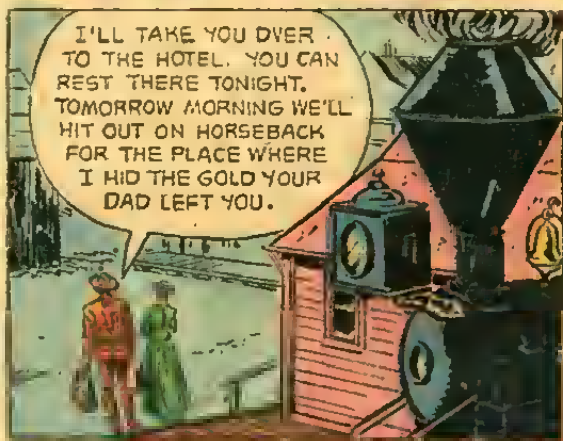
SOME DAYS LATER AS THE BIG DIAMONDESTACK ENGINE FROM APACHE ARROYO CHUGS INTO BULLET...

REDMASK? I'M SARA ANDERSON. I RECEIVED YOUR LETTER AND CAME JUST AS FAST AS I COULD!

IT'S A RELIEF TO SEE YOU, MA'AM!



I'LL TAKE YOU OVER TO THE HOTEL. YOU CAN REST THERE TONIGHT. TOMORROW MORNING WE'LL HIT OUT ON HORSEBACK FOR THE PLACE WHERE I HID THE GOLD YOUR DAD LEFT YOU.

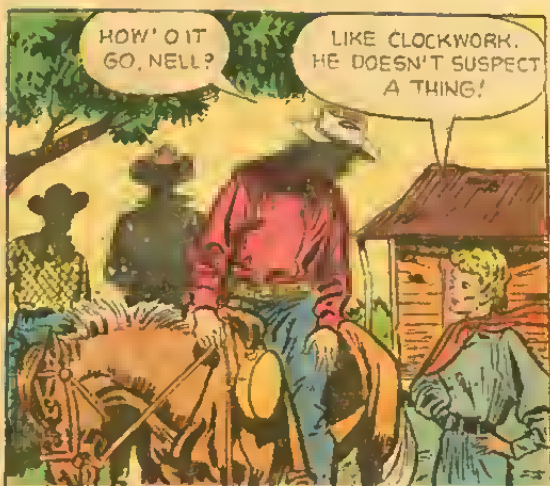
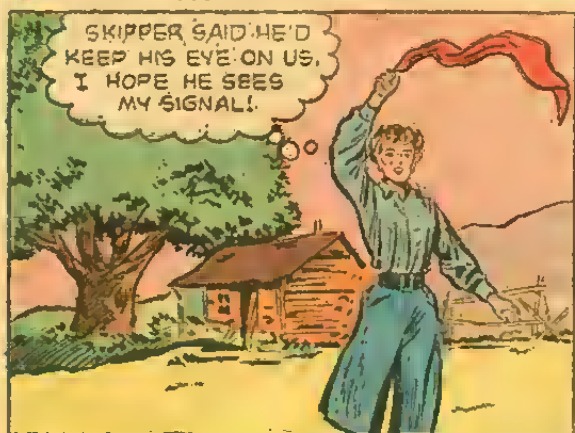


NEXT MORNING AS THE SUN LIFTS ABOVE THE HORIZON, REDMASK AND HIS GUEST GALLOP ACROSS BUFFALO FLATS—

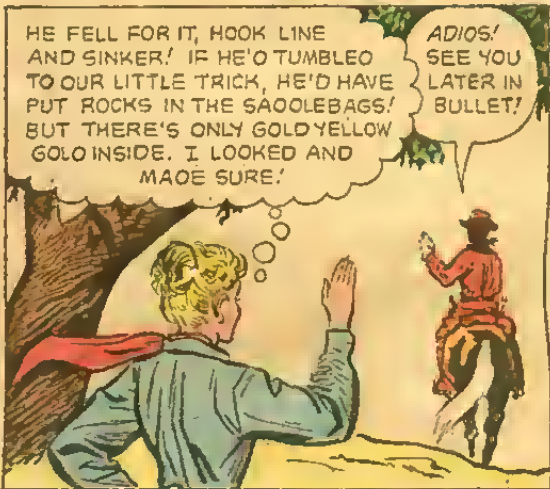
I'LL LEAVE YOU AT THE OLD PONY EXPRESS STATION AND GO ON ALONE, MA'AM. I WON'T BE LONG.



AFTER REDMASK RIDES OFF TO HIS SECRET CAVE, THE GIRL LOOSENS HER SCARF AND WAVES IT...



AN HOUR LATER, REDMASK REINS IN BEFORE THE ABANDONED PONY EXPRESS STATION AND DISMOUNTS...



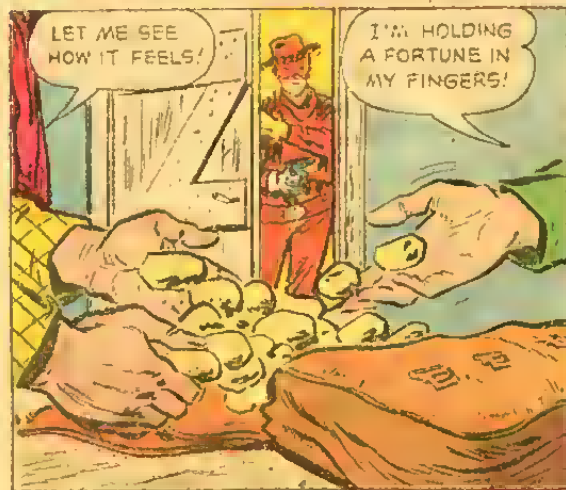


HERE COMES NELL NOW—AND SHE'S GOT THE GOLD! DOGGONE, I NEVER WOULD HAVE BELIEVED IT. WE REALLY PULLED THE WOOL OVER REDMASK'S EYES!



AND HERE IT IS! MUST BE WORTH A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS, AT LEAST!

I CAN'T WAIT TO GET MY HANDS ON IT!



LET ME SEE HOW IT FEELS!

I'M HOLDING A FORTUNE IN MY FINGERS!



BETTER TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE GOLD WHILE YOU'RE AT IT. IT'S GOING TO HAVE TO DO FOR A LONG TIME WHILE YOU'RE IN JAIL!

REDMASK!



I THOUGHT YOU SAID HE WASN'T WISE TO YOU?

YOU TIPPED HIM OFF SOMEHOW!

NO! NO! I DIDN'T!

NELL DID TIP ME OFF, BUT SHE COULDN'T HELP IT. YOU SEE, JOHN ANDERSON SPOKE ABOUT THE BLUE EYES OF HIS DAUGHTER. NELL THERE HAS BROWN EYES. THERE COULDN'T BE ANY DOUBT OF FACT THAT SHE WASN'T THE REAL SARA ANDERSON. I PLAYED ALONG WITH HER AND FOLLOWED HER HERE!



NOW I'LL FOLLOW ALL FOUR OF YOU TO THE BULLET JAIL. THEN I'LL WRITE THE REAL SARA ANDERSON TO COME FOR HER GOLD!

THE END

THE PRESTO KID

YOU HAVE MET HIM ONCE BEFORE—THE MASKED RIDER WHO NEVER PACKS A GUN... WHO MYSTIFIES BADHATS WITH AMAZING FEATS OF MAGIC! NOW READ HOW HE CAME INTO BEING

IN THE BIRTH OF THE PRESTO KID!

IN EVERY PRESTO KID TALE YOU'LL FIND A FEAT OF MAGIC CLEARLY EXPLAINED—SO ALL YOU JUNIOR PRESTOES CAN MYSTIFY YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES.

THAT'S JUST CAN'T BE! WE ALL SHOT POINT-BLANK—AND NOT ONE OF US HIT HIM!

THE SMALL MIRRORS PASTED TO MY FINGERTIPS ARE BOUNCING THE SUN'S RAYS RIGHT INTO THEIR EYES!

THOSE MAGIC RAYS COMIN' FROM HIS FINGERS—THEY'RE BLINDIN' US SO WE CAN'T TELL WHERE HE IS! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE NOW!



THE PRAIRIE STILLNESS IS SHATTERED BY WAR-WHOOPS AND RIFLE FIRE—AS HOSTILES RAID A LONELY RANCH!



YOUNG JEFF GRANT IS THE ONLY SURVIVOR!

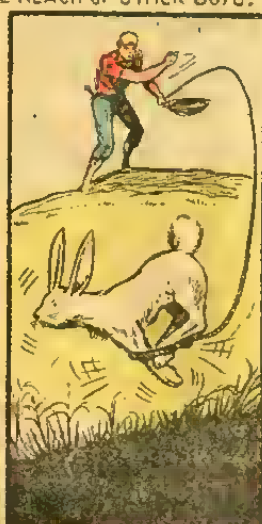
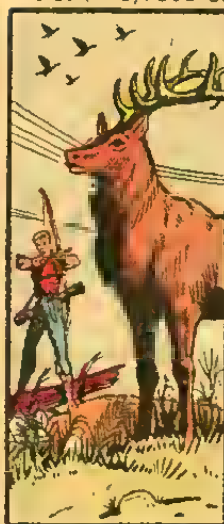
THEY'RE GONE! BUT THEIR GUNS... I CAN STILL HEAR THEIR GUNS!



THE SCARRING MEMORY OF THAT RAID WILL STAY WITH JEFF FOREVER AND MAKE HIM HATE FIREARMS SO MUCH, THAT HE WILL NEVER PACK A GUN...

FOR THREE YEARS HE LIVES LIKE A HERMIT—

TO SURVIVE, HE DEVELOPS SKILLS FAR BEYOND THE REACH OF OTHER BOYS!



THEN ONE DAY—



BUT FEAR AND FATE MAKE JEFF RUN BLINDLY!

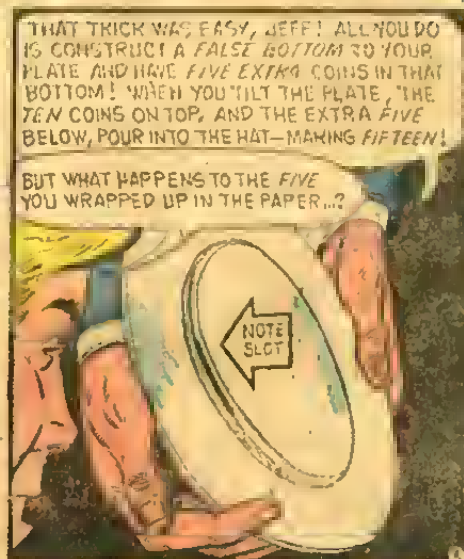
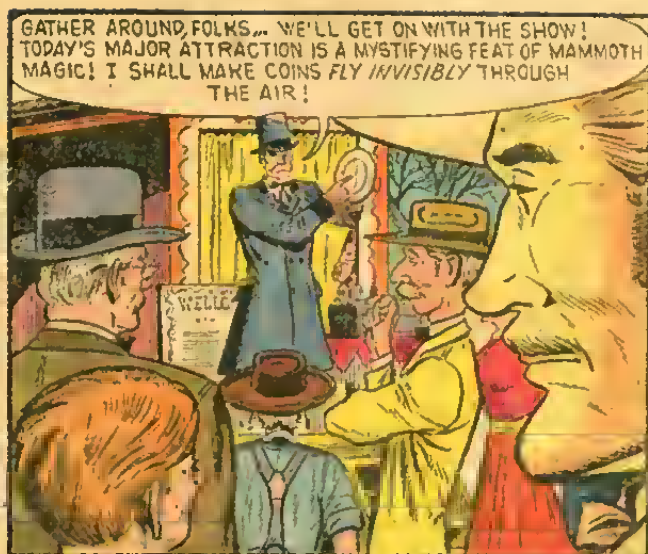


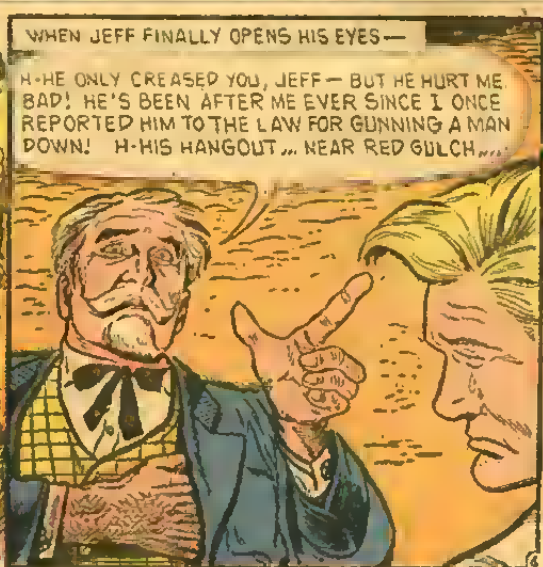
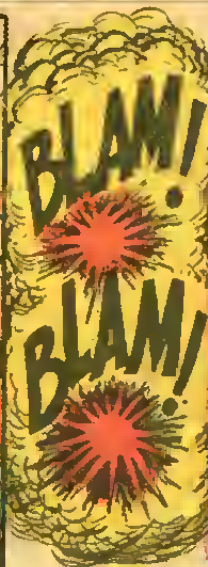
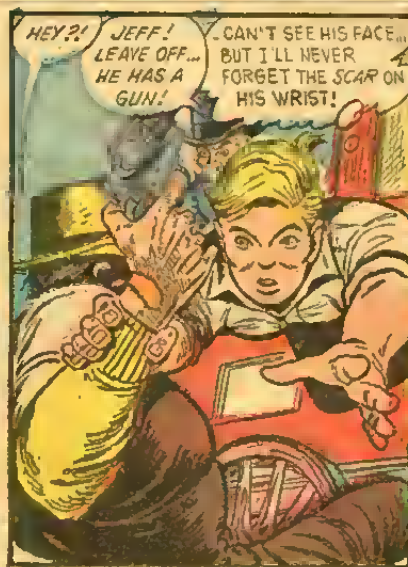
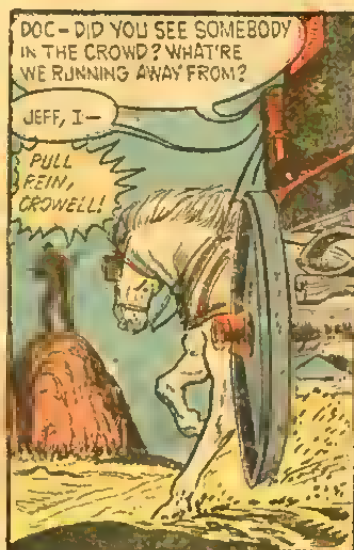
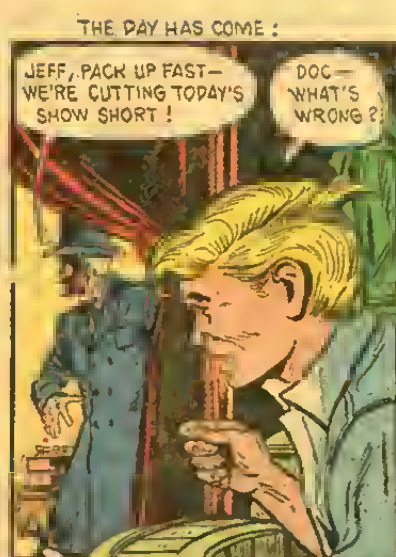
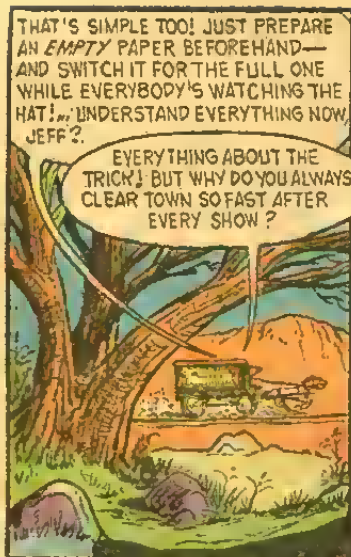
LATER—



THE OLD MAN'S KINDNESS MELTS THE ICE OF FEAR IN JEFF'S HEART!







I'M ON MY OWN AGAIN!... DOC WAS A GOOD MAN — I'LL FIND THE ONE WHO DOWNED HIM IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO! ALL I KNOW IS THAT HIS HANGOUT'S NEAR RED GULCH AND HE HAS A SCAR ON HIS WRIST, BUT I'LL FIND HIM!



SO JEFF RIDES INTO RED GULCH —

HMMM — HERE'S A READYMADE REASON FOR ME TO STAY ON HERE WITHOUT FOLKS WONDERING WHAT MY BUSINESS IS.



YEARS HAVE PASSED — AND JEFF OWNS THE BLACKSMITH SHOP NOW! BUT —

HAVEN'T SEEN HIDE NOR HAIR YET OF THE MAN WHO DOWNED DOC!



BUT THEN, ONE NIGHT —



MY HORSE NEEDS A FAST SHOEIN' JOB, BLACKSMITH — GET WORKIN'!



THE SCAR!

CAN'T MAKE A MOVE — HE HAS ME COVERED!



BETTER NOT TRY RIDIN' AFTER ME, BLACKSMITH! NOBODY'S WHO'S TRIED... HAS EVER LIVED TO TELL THE TALE!



IT WON'T BE EASY... BRINGING HIM IN WITHOUT A GUN— BUT I'M SURE GOING TO TRY!... JUST FOR INSURANCE, I'LL WEAR A DISGUISE— SO IF HE GETS AWAY TONIGHT, I'LL BE ABLE TO STAY ON AS RED GULCH'S BLACKSMITH... AND TRY AGAIN!



I FASHIONED A COSTUME OUT OF DOC'S "MAGIC" OUTFIT HE USED IN THE SHOW. THE SECRET POCKETS WILL COME IN HANDY FOR STORING SOME MAGIC TRICKS OF MY OWN!



SCARRED MAN... HERE I COME!



AT THAT MOMENT—

LUCKY THERE'S A FULL MOON TONIGHT— OR ELSE I'D NEVER HAVE SPOTTED THAT GALOOT GIVIN' CHASE! HMPE! I KNOW HOW I'LL HANDLE HIM...!



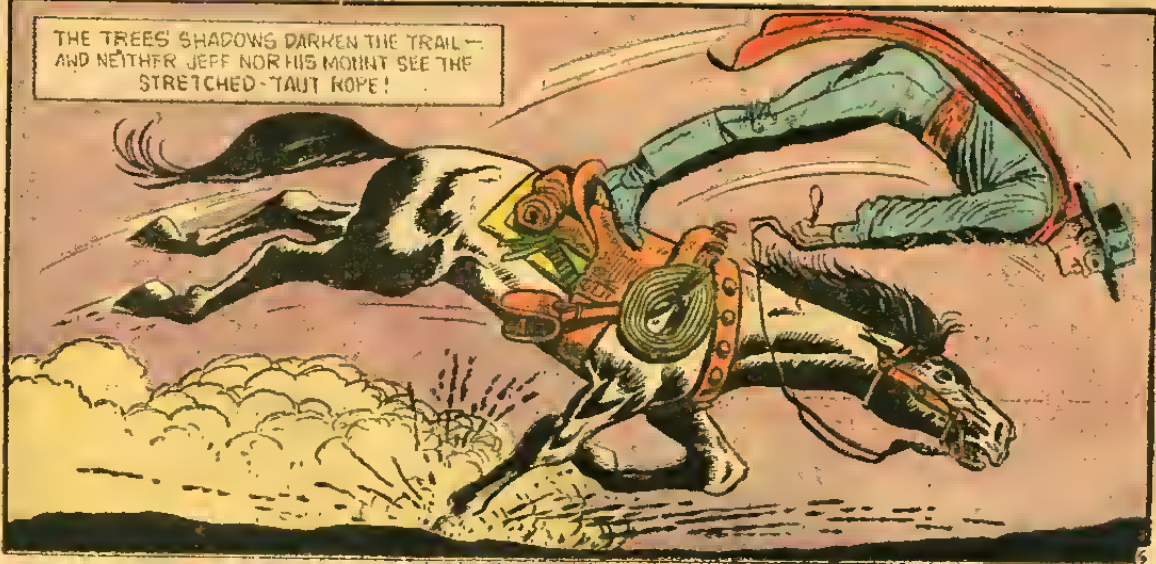
FIRST I'LL STRETCH THIS ROPE ACROSS THE TRAIL TO TRIP HIS HORSE...

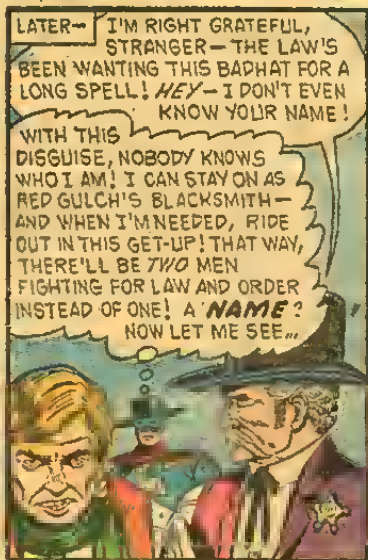
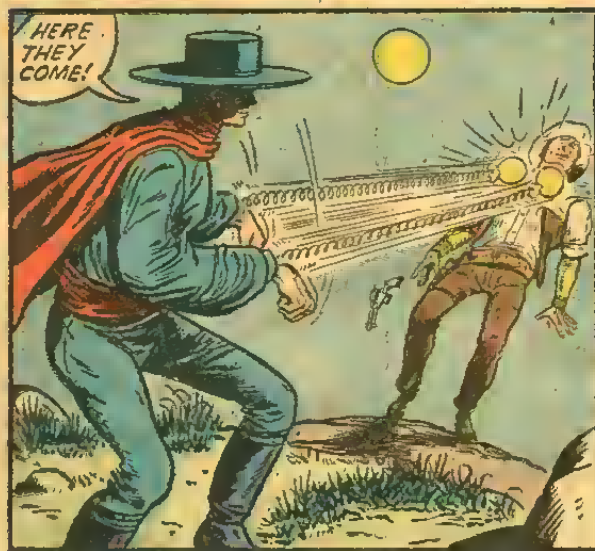
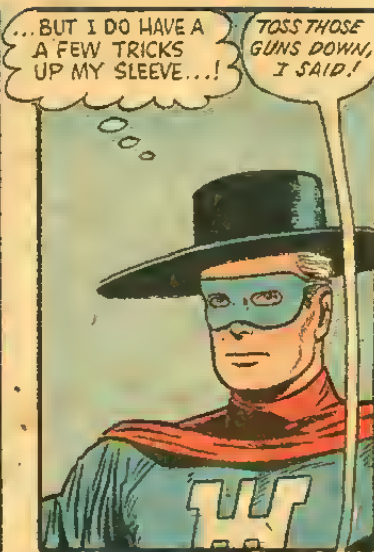


... AND NOW I'LL DROP BELOW THE RIDGE LINE— AND WAIT FOR THE FUN!



THE TREES' SHADOWS DARKEN THE TRAIL— AND NEITHER JEFF NOR HIS MOUNT SEE THE STRETCHED-TAUT ROPE!





MYSTERY! MAGIC! SCIENCE! FUN!

To Amuse and Amaze Your Friends



A necessary tool for the amateur magician and a good joke too. Plastic, 14 inches long with white tips and a black center. 5 exciting tricks—Rises, jumps, produces silk, etc. No. 240

1.50



Boomerang

Here's something new in target throwing. In case you miss, it comes right back to you, and Bingo! you're all set to "fire" again. More fun than a "barrel of monkeys"

No. 141

50¢

THROW YOUR VOICE



Ventro & Book

Your chance to be a ventriloquist. Throw your voice into trunks, behind doors, and everywhere. Instrument fits in your mouth and out of sight. You'll fool the teacher, your friends, and your family and have fun doing it. Free book on "How to Become a Ventriloquist"

No. 137

25¢



RADIO MIKE

Talk, Sing, Play thru your radio

Sing, laugh, talk, crack jokes from an other room and your voice will be reproduced thru the radio! Fool everybody into thinking it's coming right out of the radio. Easily attached to most standard radios. Made of handsome enameled metal 4 inches high. No. 112

1.98

Your chance to have eyes in back of your head. See behind or alongside and no one knows you are watching. Fun everywhere you go. No. 145

35¢

LOOK-BACK SCOPE



WHOOPEE CUSHION

Place it on a chair under a cushion, then watch the fun when someone sits down! It gives forth embarrassing noises. Made of rubber, and inflatable. A scream at parties and gatherings.

No. 247

50¢

TRICK BASEBALL

It bounces cockeyed, it curves, it dips, it's impossible to catch. It's sure to set all the kids on the block spinning after it. There's a barrel of fun in every bounce of this amazing baseball. No. 158

50¢



TALKING TEETH

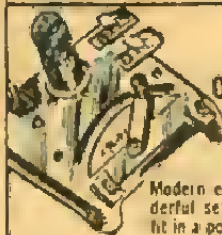
They move! They talk! They're weird! Guaranteed to shut the blabbermouths up for good. It'll really embarrass them. It's a set of big false teeth that when wound up, start to chatter away, like crazy. A great comic effect for false teeth on cold nights. No. 513

1.25



POWERFUL MANY EXCLUSIVE ITEMS AVAILABLE

COMPACT ONE TUBE RADIO



Packet Size... Brings in stations up to 1000 miles away

Modern electronics makes this wonderful set possible. So small it will fit in a pocket! Everything is supplied for you. Easy to assemble in a few minutes with just a screw driver. No soldering required. Really powerful too. Announcements of stations up to 1000 miles away come in so loud and clear you'd think they were right near home. Learn many useful and important things about radio.

No. 205

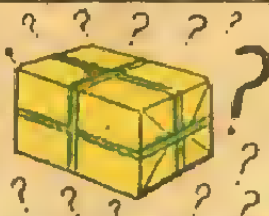
3.98



BLACK EYE JOKE

Show them the "naughty" pictures inside. They'll twist it and turn it to see, but all they do is blacken their eyes. No. 216

25¢



SURPRISE PACKAGE

Are you willing to take a chance? We won't tell you what you get, but because you're willing to gamble, we'll give you more than your money's worth. Only 50¢ No. 478



HOT SEAT

Simply place down on any seat. Heat up in a few minutes and does victim jump up fast. Only 20¢ No. 558

ELECTRIC MOTOR

6000 RPM



—Drives all Models

This is an offer that sounds unbelievable but it is being made just the same. Yes, you can have an actual electric motor for just 50¢. This compact little kit makes it a cinch to build this high power motor. And the fun you are going to get from using it. It's so simple, and your motor is ready to turn out 6000 rpm's of power to work for you. The coils of this remarkable tool actually turn at the rate of 1500 feet per minute. No. 052

Only 50¢

JOY BUZZER



The most popular joke novelty in years! Wind up and wear it like a ring. When you shake hands, it almost raises the victim off his feet with a "shocking sensation". Absolutely harmless. No. 239

Only 50¢

10 DAY TRIAL FREE

HONOR HOUSE PRODUCTS CO., Lynbrook, N. Y. Dept. 175
Cannot ship orders totalling less than \$1.00 O.
Cash me the items listed below. If I am not satisfied I may return any part of my purchase after 10 days free trial for full refund of the purchase price.

ITEM	NAME OF ITEM	HOW MANY	TOTAL PRICE

☐ I enclose \$_____ in full payment. The Honor House Products Co. will pay postage.
☐ Send C.O.D. I will pay postage on delivery plus a few cents handling.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

MULEY PIKE

BUT YOU JUST GOTTA LISTEN TO ME!
IT'S EVERYMAN'S BOUNDEN DUTY TO VOTE! IT'S REAL IMPORTANT!

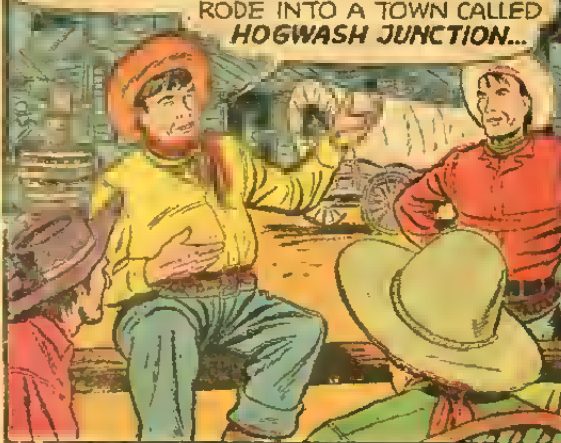
ANYTHING IMPORTANT
TO TOWNSFOLK
IS OF NO ACCOUNT TO ME!
NOW DON'T RILE ME NO MORE...
I'M A TERROR WHEN SORE! I'M

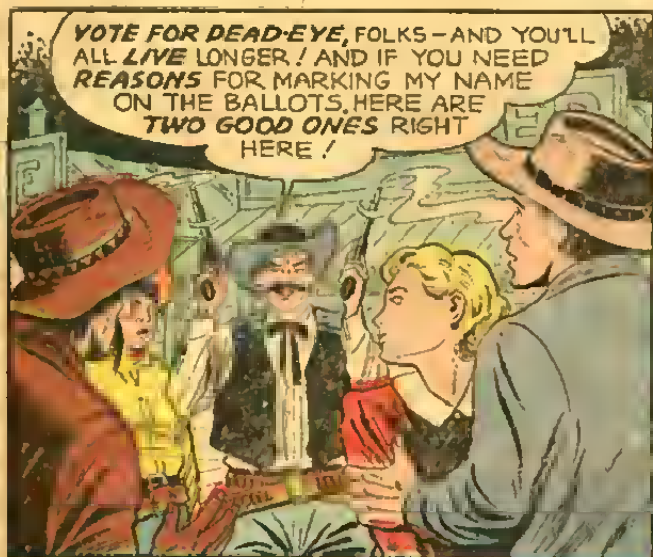
FRED GUARDINEER

STUBBORN SAM, THE MOUNTAIN MAN!

YOU CAN TAKE IT FROM ME --ELECTIONS
NOWADAYS AIN'T THE RIP-ROARIN'
ROOTIN'-TOOTIN' RUCKUSES THEY USED TO BE!
WHY I CAN REMEMBER THE TIME WHEN I
RODE INTO A TOWN CALLED
HOGWASH JUNCTION...

KRACK! KRACK!
HEY! WHO'S THAT
AIR-SALIVATIN'
GUNHAND?
THAT'S **DEAD-EYE
DANBURY,**
CANDIDATE FOR
MAYOR...!



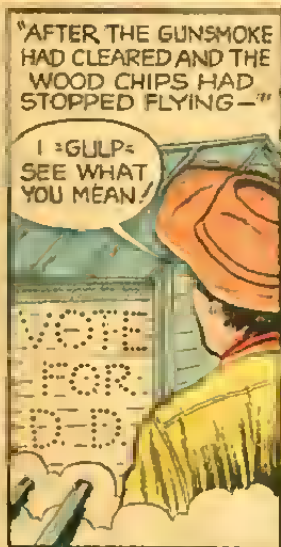


VOTE FOR DEAD-EYE, FOLKS - AND YOU'LL ALL LIVE LONGER. / AND IF YOU NEED REASONS FOR MARKING MY NAME ON THE BALLOTS, HERE ARE TWO GOOD ONES RIGHT HERE!



NOW SEE HERE, MISTER - THAT'S NO PROPER WAY TO ELECTIONEER!

AIN'T IT?... WATCH THIS!



"AFTER THE GUNSMOKE HAD CLEARED AND THE WOOD CHIPS HAD STOPPED FLYING -"

I GULP - SEE WHAT YOU MEAN!



"SO THEN I MOSEYED OVER TO HONEST OSCAR'S PLACE -"

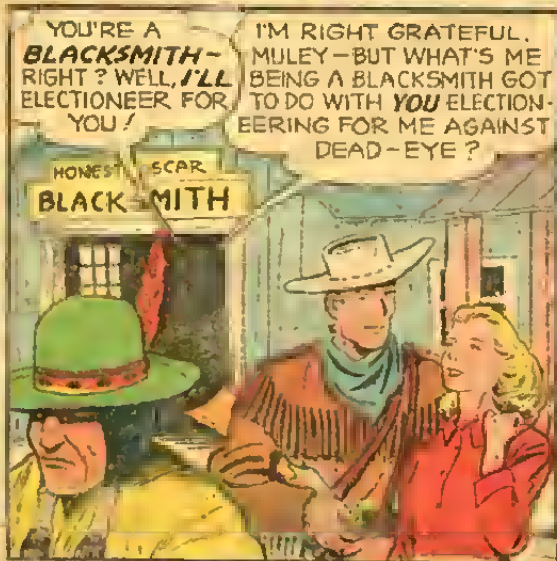
HONEST OSCAR BLACKSMITH AND MAYOR

YUP, I'M RUNNING FOR MAYOR AGAIN, MULEY - BUT BETWEEN YOU AND ME AND DEAD-EYE'S GUNS, I DON'T RATE MY CHANCES TOO HIGH.



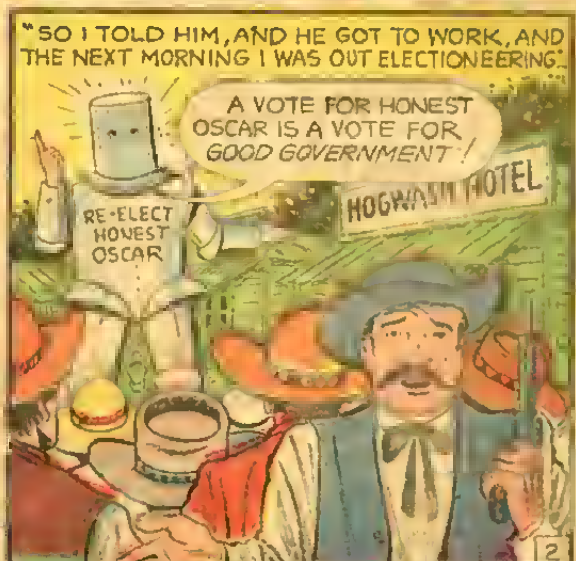
YOU'RE GIVING UP TOO EASY, HONEST OSCAR! HOW COME YOU'RE NOT OUT ELECTIONEERING ON MAIN STREET RIGHT NOW?

COULD BE I AIM ON LIVING A MITE LONGER. THAT'S HOW COME, MULEY.



YOU'RE A BLACKSMITH - RIGHT? WELL, I'LL ELECTIONEER FOR YOU!

I'M RIGHT GRATEFUL, MULEY - BUT WHAT'S ME BEING A BLACKSMITH GOT TO DO WITH YOU ELECTIONEERING FOR ME AGAINST DEAD-EYE?



"SO I TOLD HIM, AND HE GOT TO WORK, AND THE NEXT MORNING I WAS OUT ELECTIONEERING."

A VOTE FOR HONEST OSCAR IS A VOTE FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT!



"WELL, ELECTION DAY ROLLED AROUND, AND EVERYBODY VOTED... AND -"

IT'S A **TIE** - 342 FOR HONEST OSCAR AND 342 FOR DEAD-EYE DANBURY!

THAT'S NO GOOD, MULEY - THAT'S NO GOOD AT ALL...!

THE WAY THE LAW'S WRIT, THERE'LL HAVE TO BE SIX MONTHS OF RE-COUNTING BEFORE FOLKS CAN VOTE AGAIN. / **YOU** CAN'T BE HANGING AROUND HERE ALL THAT TIME, MULEY... AND IN SIX MONTHS DEAD-EYE'S GUNS WILL HAVE CHANGED A HEAP OF MINDS IN HOGWASH JUNCTION!

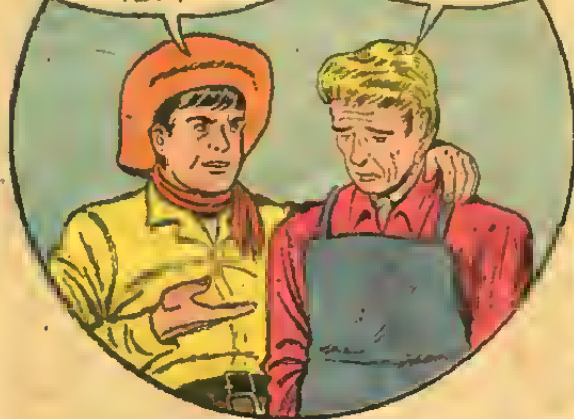


BUT THIS - HERE ELECTION'S NOT OVER TILL **MIDNIGHT**! AIN'T THERE **ANYBODY** WHO HASN'T VOTED YET?

ONLY **STUBBORN SAM, THE MOUNTAIN MAN** - BUT IT'S NO USE ASKING **HIM** TO VOTE!

A NON-VOTER?!... WHY, IT'S EVERY CITIZEN'S BOUNDEN DUTY TO VOTE! WHERE IS THIS **SAM**? I'LL DRAG HIM TO THE POLLS MYSELF!

YOU'LL ONLY BE WASTING YOUR TIME AND RISKING YOUR NECK IF YOU TRY, MULEY. **SAM'S** SEVEN FOOT TALL AND HIS FISTS ARE LIKE SLEDGE-HAMMERS...



"HE WAS A FINE UPSTANDING CITIZEN AND ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS TILL HE REACHED THE AGE OF TWENTY. BUT THEN A LIGHTNING BOLT HIT HIM..."

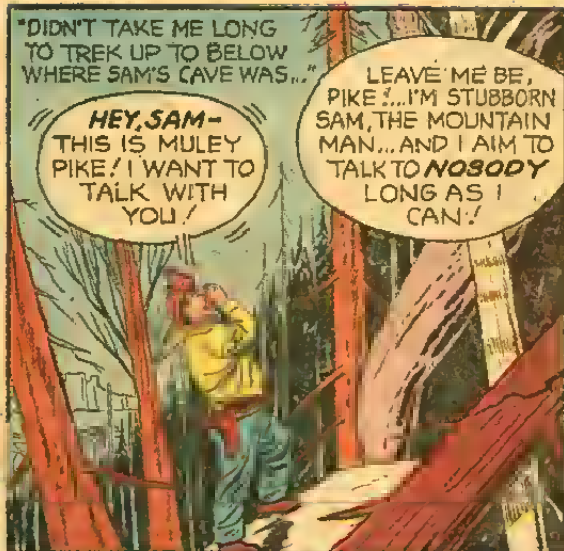
"**SAM** WAS TOO POWERFUL FOR THE LIGHTNING TO DO HIM BODILY HARM - BUT IT TURNED HIM ORNERY AND STUBBORN AND HATEFUL OF ALL TOWNSFOLK. AND HE'S BEEN LIVING A HERMIT'S LIFE UP IN THE MOUNTAINS EVER SINCE!"

WHERE YOU HEADED FOR, MULEY?

I'M HEADED FOR THAT THERE MOUNTAIN TO TELL **STUBBORN SAM** HE'S GOTTA VOTE BEFORE **MIDNIGHT**!

I'M RIGHT GRATEFUL, MULEY - AND I PROMISE YOU **SIGH**: A DECENT BURIAL WHEN YOU GET BACK!

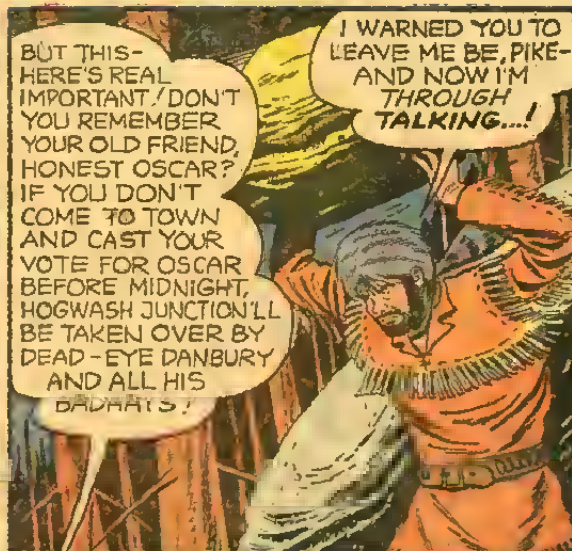




"DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO TREK UP TO BELOW WHERE SAM'S CAVE WAS..."

HEY, SAM- THIS IS MULEY PIKE! I WANT TO TALK WITH YOU!

LEAVE ME BE, PIKE... I'M STUBBORN SAM, THE MOUNTAIN MAN... AND I AIM TO TALK TO **NOSODY** LONG AS I CAN!



BUT THIS- HERE'S REAL IMPORTANT! DON'T YOU REMEMBER YOUR OLD FRIEND, HONEST OSCAR? IF YOU DON'T COME TO TOWN AND CAST YOUR VOTE FOR OSCAR BEFORE MIDNIGHT, HOGWASH JUNCTION'LL BE TAKEN OVER BY DEAD-EYE DANBURY AND ALL HIS **BADHAYS!**

I WARNED YOU TO LEAVE ME BE, PIKE- AND NOW I'M **THROUGH TALKING...**!

"HOW WAS I TO KNOW THAT IN JUMPING OUT OF THE WAY OF THAT BOULDER, I WAS BACKING PLUNK INTO A SAPLING THAT HAD MORE SPRING TO IT THAN A PRAIRIE-STARVED BRONCO? AND WHEN IT SPRANG BACK-!"



WHOOOSH

I'M SURE **=YAWN=** GLAD THAT PESTY GALOOT WENT ON HIS WAY! HE WAS RILING ME UP SOMETHING FIERCE...!



HEY! WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN HERE?!

ME! WELL...ER...YOU SEE...I'M THE HERMIT FROM THE **NEXT MOUNTAIN!** THOUGHT I'D...ER...COMPARE NOTES WITH YOU ON HOW HATEFUL MANKIND IS, SO I JUST SORTA **SAWED ONE MY WAY THROUGH!**



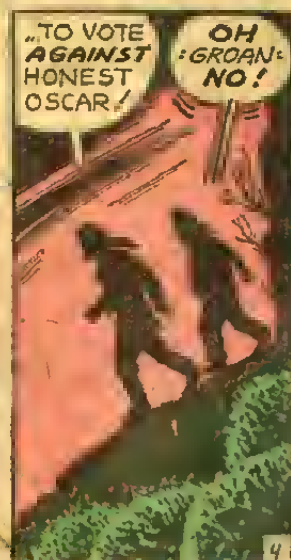
YOU CAN'T FOOL **ME!** YOU'RE THE GALOOT THAT WAS TRYING TO GET ME TO GO DOWN TO TOWN TO VOTE FOR HONEST OSCAR! WELL...CAN YOU GUESS WHAT STUBBORN SAM'S GONNA DO **NOW?**

I-I CAN... AND IT'S **SHUDDER!** SURE AIN'T A PRETTY PICTURE!



I'M GOING DOWN TO TOWN...

YOU ARE?!



"TO VOTE **AGAINST** HONEST OSCAR!"

OH **=GROAN=** NO!



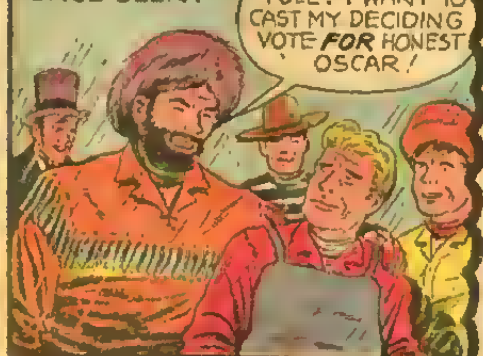
"STUBBORN SAM JUST **HAD** TO BE STOPPED / BUT **HOW??** THERE WAS MORE THUNDER... THEN A BOLT OF LIGHTNING — AND THEN **YOURS TRULY**, THE FASTEST THINKING COWHAND IN ALL THE WEST, SAW WHAT I HAD TO DO!"



"BEING SO ORNERY, NATURALLY HE GRABBED IT / AND JUST LIKE I'D FIGURED, IT WAS A SURE-FIRE **LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR!**"



"AND ALSO, JUST LIKE I'D FIGURED, SAM WAS TOO POWERFUL FOR THE LIGHTNING TO DO HIM BODILY HARM — BUT IT TURNED HIM RIGHT BACK INTO THE FINE UPSTANDING CITIZEN AND GOOD FRIEND OF HONEST OSCAR THAT HE'D ONCE BEEN!"



NOW THEN — DOESN'T THAT YARN PROVE ONCE AND FOR ALL THAT ELECTIONS HAVE CHANGED A HEAP SINCE THE GOOD OLD DAYS?



...STRETCHERS OF THE TRUTH **NEVER** CHANGE!



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THE TERRIBLE TRIO

THE TERRIBLE TRIO, they called themselves—and they sure worked hard to earn that handle. They were full-time bandits, ever ready to push honest men around and clean out every bank and saddlebag that crossed their path.

They were ripsnorters, all right—every inch of them crammed with ornery greed. Their mounts had the sudden swiftness of tornadoes, their fists were stampedes with knuckles—and their boast was that they could shoot out the eye of a sleepy gnat at a hundred paces.

They were a lawman's nightmare. When they hit a town, they turned it upside down and inside out. They even turned night into day—for honest folk stayed awake clear around the clock when those three buzzards came riding through.

Sure, posses set out on their trail. And more than once the Trio were almost hogtied and brought in. But black luck rode with them—those three kept squeezing through mantraps that everybody had been dead sure were without loopholes. It got so, those three came to think of themselves as plumb untouchable. They were sure they'd keep riding herd on the West just about forever.

"We're as tough as nails," boasted Mike Morgan, the tall one. "But nobody's found the hammer to drive us in and make us set!"

"We're as fast as the wind," boasted Ned Nixon, the half-pint one. "But winds blow themselves out, and we never will!"

"We're as ornery as cactus," boasted Sam Salk, the chunky one. "But cactus can be handled with gloves—and NOBODY can handle us!"

Well, that's how things stood, with the Trio having everything their own way and getting ever more boastful—until the night they hit Red Gulch. . . .

It was after midnight when they galloped into town, caterwauling and shooting up into the air, breaking up folks' sleep out of downright meanness. And then, to prove their toughness, after having dragged everybody awake, they broke into the bank.

But Red Gulch was where *Jeff Grant* had his blacksmith shop—and Jeff, so slow moving and peaceable during the day, rode for the law as the *Presto Kid* by night! And although Presto always rode with empty holsters, the cunning of his magic tricks and the might of his flailing fists never failed to bring badhats to heel!

It didn't take long for the Trio to bust out of the Red Gulch bank, their saddlebags crammed with honest men's money. They galloped clear through the sheriff's posted posse, ducked a host of flying bullets, and outdistanced the mounts of their pursuers.

They were in the foothills now, resting their own mounts, and preparing to divvy up the loot—when a grim voice rang out from behind them.

"Drop those saddlebags," the voice ordered coldly.

Clearing leather with the speed of striking rattlers, the Trio spun around to face the one man who had managed to stick to their trail.

He was masked and he wore a long cloak . . . and his hands were empty!

The Trio smiled cruelly, almost feeling pity for this loco galoot who thought he could stand up against them barehanded. He had as much chance against their straight-shooting Colts as a jackrabbit cornered by three cougars.

They raised their Colts and took careful aim. . . .

The moon was shining bright behind them, so the arroyo where they all stood was like a spotlighted stage, and they could see the masked man's eyes glittering strangely in a fixed steady stare, and they could hear the humming drone of his stern voice.

And then it happened!

The Terrible Trio gulped like a chorus of bullfrogs. Their jaws dropped like corral gates swinging open. Their eyes bulged as they stared down at their hands.

For there in Mike Morgan's hand, instead of the Colt that he had drawn from his holster, Mike saw a dainty bouquet of lilies!

Ned Nixon was staring down at a straw broom in his hand!

And Sam Salk found himself holding a balloon on a string!

They were still standing there, rooted by wonder, sweating ice water, breathing hard with disbelief—when the posse rode up, and Presto handed them over to the sheriff.

The Trio's hands were bound behind them now, and they were up on their saddles, ready for the long ride to the county jail.

"Presto—you've done it again," said the sheriff admiringly. "But this one beats all. Here three of the best shots in the West had the drop on you—and you, barehanded as always, hogtied them without a ruckus. Would you mind telling a friend just how you managed?"

Presto chuckled behind his mask. "Wouldn't mind a mite, sheriff," he said. "Just another of my magic tricks. I used HYPNOTISM on those three. With the help of the full moon, I got them staring straight into my eyes. . . . I got them to BELIEVING, their Colts had changed into more peaceable things right in their hands!"

Well, when the sheriff and his friends heard that, they got to laughing so hard at how Presto had bamboozled the badhats; they bent clear over in their saddles and kept hitting their thighs with their hands.

Only the Trio didn't laugh. Those three sat bound on their mounts, their faces swollen with anger at the masked Lawman who'd tricked them—and they all swore a silent bitter vow to get back at the Presto Kid as soon as they could.

And the way everything turned out, they had their chance right soon. For while head-

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ing towards the county jail, riding a dry river bed, they and the posse were hit by a sudden flash flood that roared down at them without warning—and what with every last man bent only on saving himself and his mount from drowning, the Terrible Trio made their escape.

They were at liberty now, in a cave, figuring out how to get Presto.

"Next time we have him in our gunsights" said Mike, "we'll make sure *not* to look into his eyes!"

"We'll 'do better' than that," said Ned. "We'll open fire *before* he even sees us!"

"And since we've all sworn not to clear out of this territory till after we're done with him," said Sam, "the Presto Kid is a goner for sure!"

So the Trio kept riding through Red Gulch, never stopping long enough to tangle head-on with the sheriff's posse, but doing mischief, and never failing to cry out a challenge for the Presto Kid to try to pull them in again.

At first, everybody thereabouts was sure those three were just putting their heads in a big noose—but as time passed and the Presto Kid never made a move, folks began to wonder if maybe he was fearful of pressing his luck . . . maybe he was downright scared of taking on those three badhats again.

The Trio got to feeling right-uppity. They robbed a stage on the Lincoln trail in broad daylight, they stole a mine office's store of nuggets—but still the Presto Kid did not show himself!

After a while those three badhats were feeling so sure of themselves, they rode into town one night and nailed a handbill to the post office door.

\$5,000 REWARD, the handbill said, FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE PRESTO KID. And it was signed: THE TERRIBLE TRIO.

In the morning, folks stared at that handbill with grim faces. It sure looked like the Trio had the Presto Kid plumb buffaloed. But even if anybody was lowdown enough to turn Presto in—how could the varmint ever contact the three badhats? . . . Nope, the handbill was nothing but a cruel joke. The Presto Kid had no reason to fear anybody collecting the reward—but he sure had to worry about losing the respect of all honest folk who had once admired him so. . . .

That's how come even the Trio were shocked when this hunched-up wizened old galoot rode clear into their hideout canyon and announced that he knew where they could collar Presto.

"How'd you find us here, old-timer?" they wanted to know.

"Plumb lucky," he said. "Never reckoned on finding you—just been out looking for gold. But now that I've run across you, it sure won't hurt a feeble old man to make \$5,000 the easy way."

And there and then he told them what had been the best guarded secret in the whole wild west—that the Presto Kid and Jeff

Grant were one and the same man!

Well, when those badhats heard that, they kicked their heels together with wicked joy. Their knowing that, they felt, without Grant being on to the fact that they knew, would enable them to close in on him before he could make a move.

Sure enough, when the old man asked for the \$5,000 reward, the Trio drove him off, telling him that letting him stay alive was reward enough . . . and then they hit the trail for Red Gulch.

They rode at a steady lope, grinning all the way, sure that this time there could be no slip-up . . . for Jeff would never have a chance to stare into their eyes before they started squeezing trigger.

When Red Gulch was in sight, they used their spurs, galloping clear into Main Street, and pulling rein only when they'd reached Jeff's shop.

And at that moment, his broad back a perfect target, Jeff was bending over the anvil, working on a horseshoe. Before he could even turn his head, they were already reaching for their holsters. . . .

And then it happened again!

Instead of his finger squeezing a trigger, Mike found himself holding a bouquet of lilies in his hand!

Ned found himself sighting along a broomstick!

And Sam groaned at the sight of a balloon dancing on the end of a string!

Only this time it was a little different—the things they were holding in their hands were REAL! And these things were of no help in standing off the sheriff and his posse who came riding up just then—that was for sure!

Everybody in the territory has never stopped wondering how Presto did it that day—and Presto never did tell.

For telling would have meant letting out the secret that he and Jeff were one and the same man.

You see—the Presto Kid *himself*, well disguised and reading track as only he could, had been the old codger who'd found their hideout and tipped the Trio off. And not dreaming who he really was, they'd stared full in his eyes while speaking to him. It had been a cinch to hypnotize them, draw their Colts out of their holsters, and replace the Colts with flowers, broom, and balloon. Then he'd beaten them to Red Gulch by riding a shortcut—and he'd hypnotized them so, that after their play in town, they'd clean forget about what had been told them in the canyon.

Sure, Presto hadn't been happy at having to wait all that time before making his move—but a lawman who rides with empty holsters, has to be real careful not to move in till the time is right.

Anyhow, everything was smooth as silk in the end—the three badhats were out of circulation, and the Presto Kid's secret had as little chance of getting out as that Trio did—locked-up as they were in the strongest cell in the county jail!

THE END

RED MASK

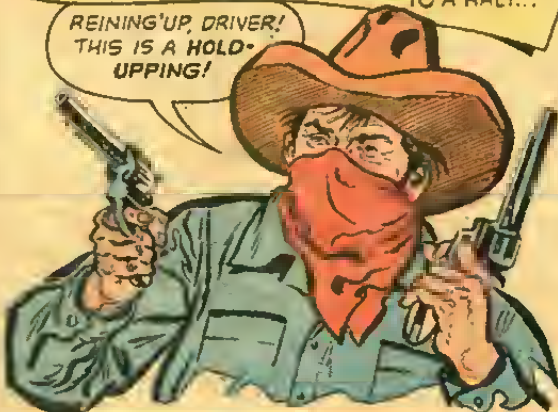
WHEN MEX LALLAPOOSA "TURNS BAD" AND BEGINS TO ROB TRAINS AND STAGECOACHES, IT BECOMES REDMASK'S PAINFUL DUTY TO ARREST HIM... THE EVIDENCE IS ALL AGAINST MAX. WITNESSES SWEAR HE IS GUILTY. HE HAS NO ALIBI. FATE ITSELF SEEMS TO JOIN FORCES AGAINST HIM, SO THAT EVEN REDMASK THINKS HE IS —

the **CROOKED COOK**



AT A NARROW BEND IN HORSESHOE CANYON, A GRIM FIGURE ORDERS THE BULLET STAGECOACH TO A HALT...

REINING'UP, DRIVER! THIS IS A HOLD-UPPING!



DO NOT BEING AFRAID. MY MEN WEE NOT HARM YOU EEF YOU BEHAVING YOURSELF!



ONE PASSENGER, UNABLE TO STAND THE SUSPENSE, LEAPS FORWARD—



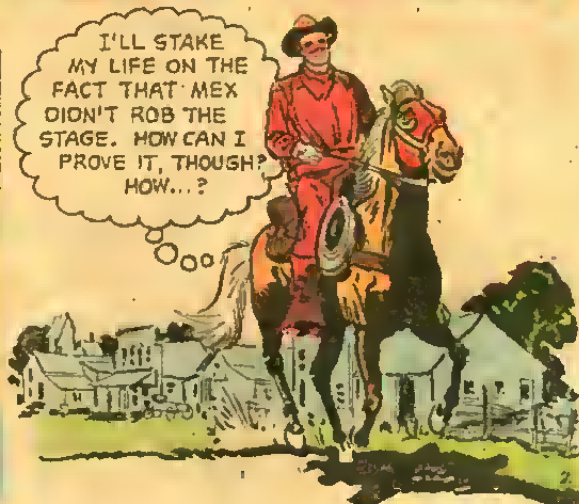
AN HOUR LATER, IN THE TOWN OF BULLET—



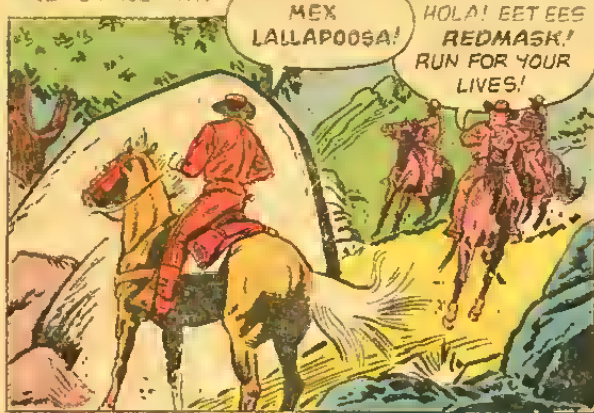
REDMASK IS NOT THE ONLY PERSON WHO DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THIS STRANGE SITUATION—



AND SO MEX LALLAPOOSA GOES TO JAIL!



FATE PLAYS STRANGE TRICKS ON HUMAN BEINGS.
THAT SAME DAY, TOWARD SUNSET, REDMASK COMES
FACE TO FACE WITH—



AS IF TO AID THE DESPERADOES,
REDMASK'S BRONC SLIPS ON A BIT
OF LOOSE SHALE ROCK!



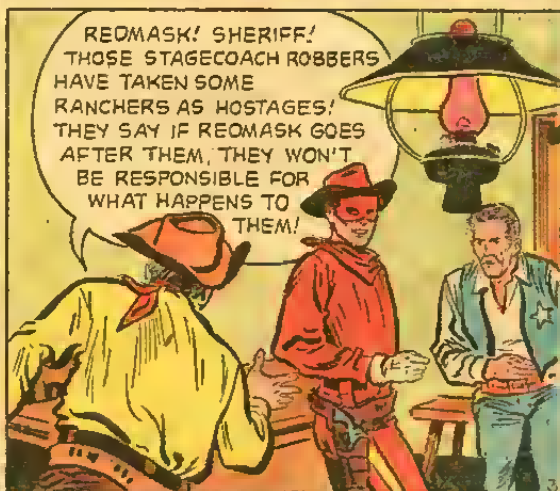
NO USE TO FOLLOW
THEM NOW. I'LL NEVER
FIND THEM IN THE GATHER-
ING DUSK. BUT WHAT WAS
SHERIFF GAGE THINKING
OF, TO TURN MEX LOOSE
THE WAY HE DID?



WHEN THE BANDITS REALIZE THE
GUARDIAN OF THE RIO GRANDE IS
NO LONGER FOLLOWING THEM,
THEY REIN IN—



THAT SAME NIGHT, IN THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE—



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, REDMASK AND THE REAL MEX, LALLAPOOSA ARE DEEP IN THE HILLS—



I TALKED SHERIFF GAGE INTO LETTING YOU GO FREE IN MY CUSTODY, MEX. I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU!

MEX LALLAPOOSA HELPING HEES GOOD FRIEND REDMASK! YOU BETTING I WILL!

FROM WHAT THE FAMILIES OF THE MEN TAKEN AS HOSTAGES SAID, THOSE OUTLAWS ARE BOUND FOR THE LAVA COUNTRY. SINCE YOU LOOK SO MUCH LIKE THEIR LEADER, I WANT YOU TO TAKE HIS PLACE—RELEASE THE HOSTAGES, AND LEAD THE GANG INTO A TRAP IN BULLET!



FOR TWO DAYS, REDMASK SEARCHES THE LAVA FLATS. THEN—



AT LAST—A LITTLE GOOD LUCK! IT'S THE BANDIT CHIEFHIMSELF!

MAMA MIA! EET EES ME—MYSELF! WHAT AM I DOING DOWN THERE?

A LARIAT SNAKES OUT—



I HAVE BEEN FINDING A NEW JOB FOR MY GANG. NOW I WEEL TELL THEM AND—WHAT'S THEES?



I AM SEEING THEENGs!

HO! I NEVER KNEW I WAS SUCH A BIG, FAT PEEG! PAH!



WE'LL MAKE CAMP FOR THE NIGHT. IN THE MORNING, YOU RIDE ON TO THE BANDIT CAMP, WHILE I TAKE THE PRISONER IN. NOW I'LL TAKE FORTY WINKS. YOU STAND GUARD, WAKE ME IN AN HOUR...

BUT, WHILE REDMASK DDZES—



HEY, THERE, ME! I AM THIRSTY. GIVING YOURSELF A DRINK!

HA! YOU ARE NOT FONNY!

UNSEEN BY MEX LALLA-POOSA, ONE HAND GRASPS A ROCK—



NEXT MOMENT—



EET TAKING MUCH TIME TO WORK ONE HAND LOOSE, BUT EET'S WORTH EET! NOW I SHALL TIE MY HONEST DOUBLE UP.. AND PRETENDING TO BE HIM!

IN THE MORNING...

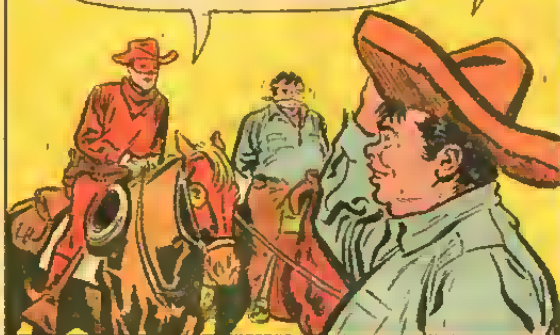


I SEE YOU TIED AND GAGGED HIM!

SI, SENOR REDMASK. HE EES MAKING SO MUCH NOISE, I AM AFRAID HE WAKING YOU!

I'LL TAKE THE PRISONER IN TO BULLET, MEX. YOU RIDE TO HIS GANG AND TAKE HIS PLACE. FREE THE HOSTAGES. THEN LEAD HIS MEN INTO A TRAP TOMORROW!

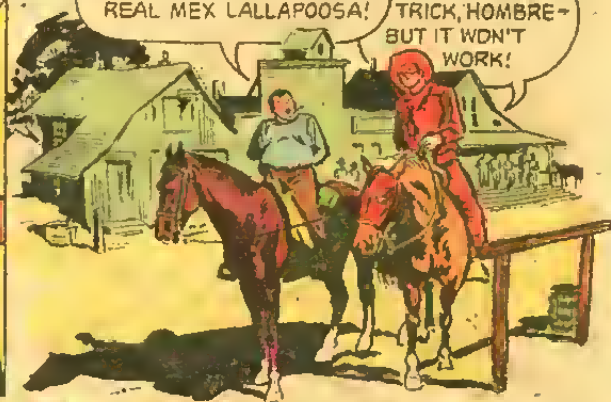
I WILL DO EET!



AS REDMASK TAKES HIS PRISONER IN TO JAIL—

I TELLING YOU I AM THE REAL MEX LALLAPOOSA!

IT'S A GOOD TRICK, HOMBRE— BUT IT WON'T WORK!



WHEN THE RELEASED HOSTAGES RIDE INTO BULLET, REDMASK IS NATURALLY CERTAIN THAT HE HAS THE REAL BANDIT LEADER IN JAIL—

PREPARATIONS ARE MADE FOR THE TRAP INTO WHICH MEX LALLAPOOSA IS TO LEAD THE OUTLAWS. ALL DAY THEY WAIT. THEN, TOWARD EVENING—

MEX TOLD US YOUR PLAN, REDMASK!

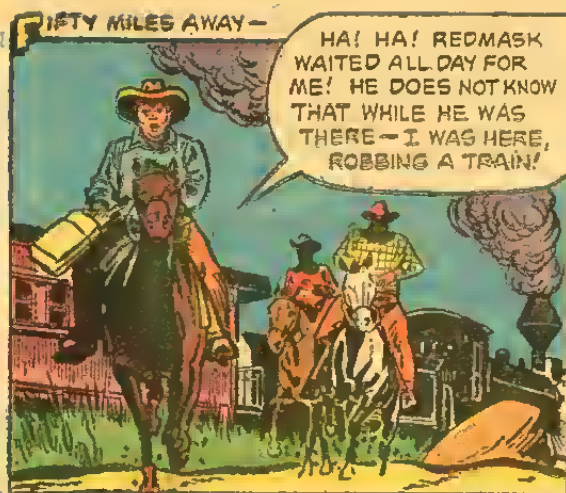
IT'S A GODD ONE! I'LL HAVE MY COWBOYS RIDE IN AND HELP YOU CAPTURE THESE DESPERADDES!



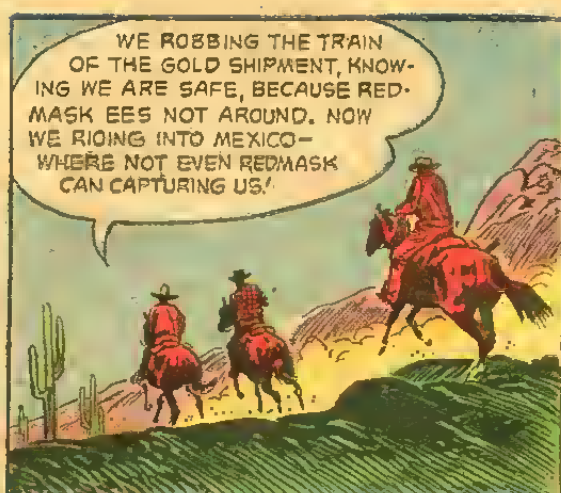
THE BANDITS DIDN'T COME! WAS I WRONG? IS IT REALLY MEX I HAVE IN JAIL—DROID THE BANDITS GET WISE AND—DO AWAY WITH HIM...



FIFTY MILES AWAY—



HA! HA! REDMASK WAITED ALL DAY FOR ME! HE DOES NOT KNOW THAT WHILE HE WAS THERE—I WAS HERE, ROBBING A TRAIN!



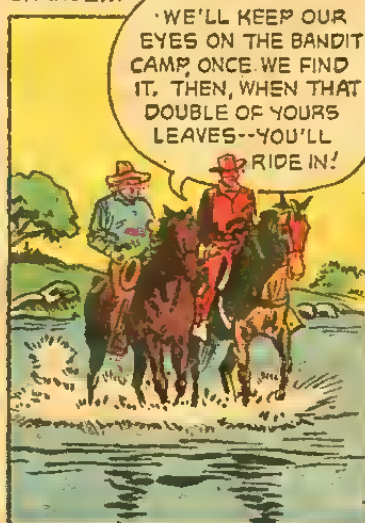
WE ROBBING THE TRAIN OF THE GOLD SHIPMENT, KNOWING WE ARE SAFE, BECAUSE REDMASK EES NOT AROUND. NOW WE RIDING INTO MEXICO—WHERE NOT EVEN REDMASK CAN CAPTURING US!

NEXT DAY, WHEN HE LEARNS OF THE TRAIN ROBBERY, REDMASK REALIZES THE TRUTH...



YOUR DOUBLE TRICKED ME, MEX. THIS CABLEGRAM SAYS HE ROBBED THE SILVER CITY EXPRESS OF ITS GOLD SHIPMENT! BUT WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET!

HOURS LATER, REDMASK AND MEX LALLAPOOSA SPLASH ACROSS A SHALLOW FORD OF THE RIO GRANDE...



WE'LL KEEP OUR EYES ON THE BANDIT CAMP, ONCE WE FIND IT. THEN, WHEN THAT DOUBLE OF YOURS LEAVES--YOU'LL RIDE IN!

THREE DAYS OF SEARCH, AND ANOTHER WEEK OF CAREFUL WATCHING ARE FINALLY REWARDED—

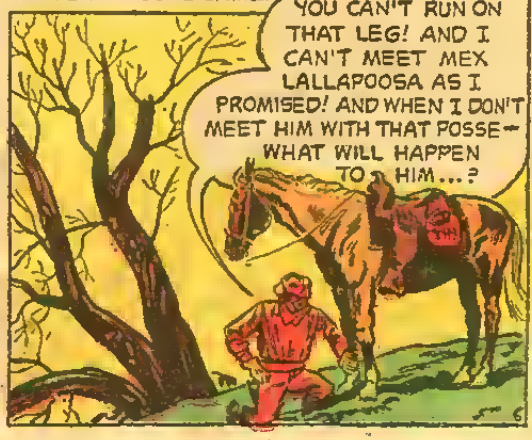


THERE HE GOES NOW. REMEMBER, MEX—BRING THE MEN OVER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIO GRANDE. TELL THEM YOU'RE GOING TO ROB A BANK!



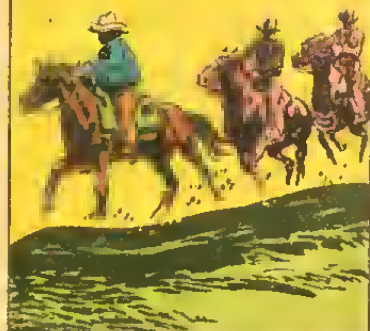
I'LL ALERT A POSSE AND HAVE IT READY TO ROUND UP THOSE BAD HATS IN SHORT ORDER!

AND THEN—AS A LAST IRONIC GESTURE OF A CRUEL FATE—REDMASK DISCOVERS THAT HIS HORSE HAS GONE LAME!

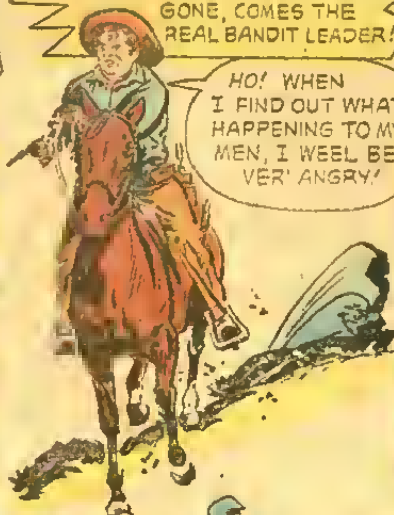


YOU CAN'T RUN ON THAT LEG! AND I CAN'T MEET MEX LALLAPOOSA AS I PROMISED! AND WHEN I DON'T MEET HIM WITH THAT POSSE—WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HIM...?

UNAWARE THAT REDMASK IS UNABLE TO HELP HIM, MAX FOLLOWS ORDERS! POSING AS THE BANDIT, HE BRINGS THE OUTLAWS TO ROB A BANK!



BEHIND HIM, HAVING RETURNED UNEXPECTEDLY TO HIS CAMP AND FOUND HIS MEN GONE, COMES THE REAL BANDIT LEADER!

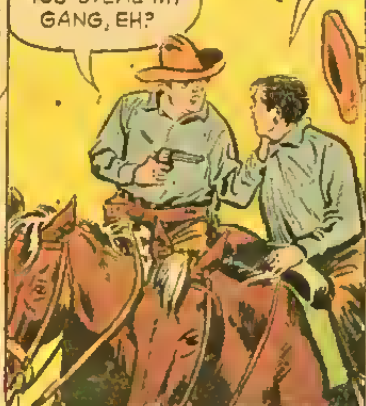


HO! WHEN I FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENING TO MY MEN, I WEEL BE VER' ANGRY!

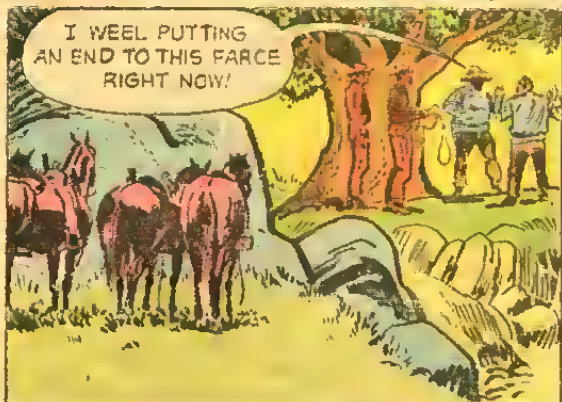
ONCE AGAIN, THE "TWIN" MEET FACE TO FACE—

SO! YOU POSE AS SENOR EL TIGRE, WHO EES MYSELF, EH? YOU STEAL MY GANG, EH?

{GULP} ER—EES JOKE, NO? NO??

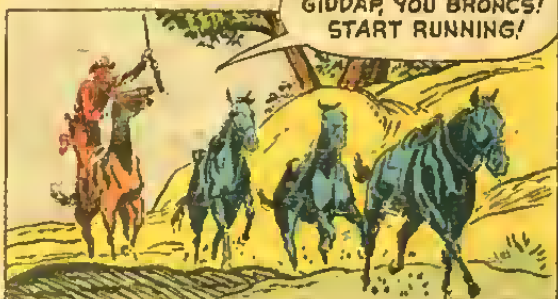


I WEEL PUTTING AN END TO THIS FARCE RIGHT NOW!



SUDDENLY THE CRIMSON FORM OF REDMASK—WHO HAS COME AS FAST AS HIS OWN LEGS AND A CRIPPLED HORSE CAN CARRY HIM—RACES FOR THE OUTLAWS' PONIES...

GIDDAP, YOU BRONCS! START RUNNING!



MAMACITA! WHAT CAN ONE MAN—EVEN REDMASK—DO AGAINST ALL THESE BADMEN?



I CAN DO PLENTY, MEX! NONE OF THE OUTLAWS HAVE RIFLES—WHILE I DO! SINCE A RIFLE CAN OUTDISTANCE A REVOLVER I CAN SIT HERE AND PICK THEM ALL OFF UNLESS THEY SURRENDER!



AND SO, EL TIGRE AND HIS MEN ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE! BUT FOR SOME WEEKS AFTERWARDS, MEX LALLAPOOSA WALKS THE STREETS OF BULLET LIKE THIS—

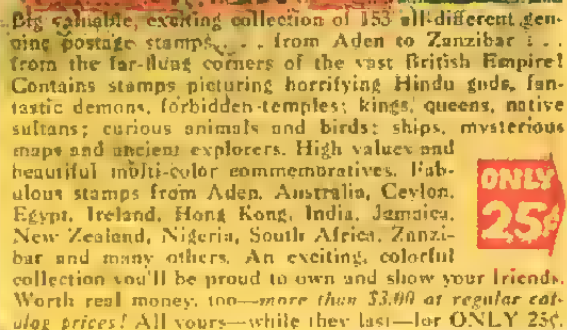


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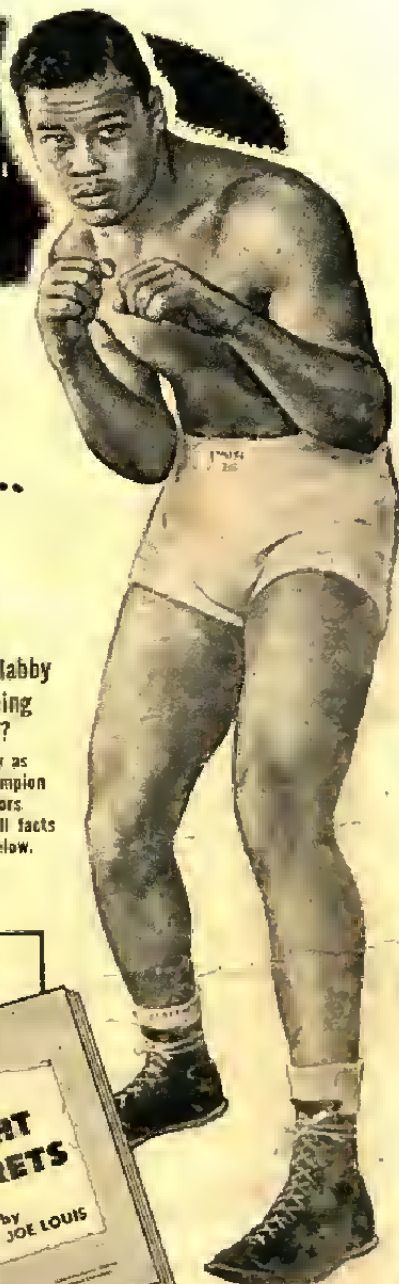
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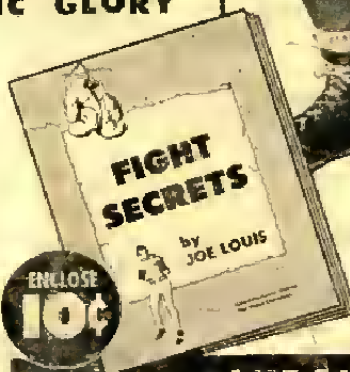


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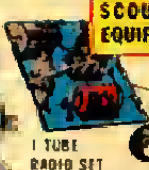
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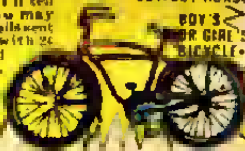


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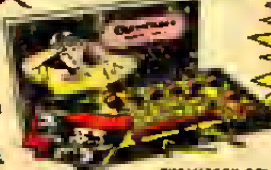


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